MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET

IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2004

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Annual dues are individual, $15; couple/family $25; student or senior (60+) $10; senior couple $19; business/association $50; patron $100.

Your Museum

The Preservation Ladies (and Gents) met at the home of Sally Bund in February 2004. Most are graduates of the Historic Preservation Program at EMU. Director Ted Ligibel is in the center. Photo: Pat Ligibel.

I'm sorry that I wasn't able to alert you to our **Antiques in April Appraisal** by DuMouchelles of Detroit held at the Dixboro Church on **Saturday, April 3**. A decision to have it was made after our last board meeting, with no chance to get it in the ***Impressions***. Those of you who are members got a post card announcing the Appraisal. I'm hoping you learned about it somehow and were able to attend. It is always fascinating to see what people bring. One year someone brought a shrunken head!

We have some **old doors** (from the 1830s) and **storm windows** in the Museum basement that we need to remove to improve our storage capacity. If anyone is interested in purchasing them contact our Collections Chair **Judy Chrisman, at judychr@aol.com.**

Our exhibit on **Lewis and Clark** is seeing quite a few visitors after a nice article appeared in the ***Ann Arbor News*** on March 10 that also had a nice profile of **Alice Cerniglia,** our new staff person. On **March 9, 1804,** Lewis and Clark were on hand as official witnesses to the ceremonies marking the formal transfer of **Louisiana** to the U.S. In recognition of the French majority of the crowd, the French Tricolor flew over St. Louis for one night. Plans were made to start up the Missouri River on April 18 and this would be the last opportunity for the Corps to contact their families for the next 18-24 months. Thanks to **Marieanna Bair** of the **Brighton Area Historical Society** whose newsletter ***Trail Tales*** has been chronicling the Bicentennial of the **Voyage of Discovery** for the last several issues. This exhibit will end in April and will be passed on to a woman's group for their own use.

Alice reported that a community service person finally fixed the computer for her. It was a godsend. She is also working with **Amy Rosenberg,** a former curator at the Kelsey Museum, who has volunteered to assess our textiles. She is happy to be working with such great volunteers. She is also developing educational packets for the Lewis and Clark exhibit

Our **Museum on Main Street (MoMS)** will be actively participating in the **"Wander Washtenaw"** events on the weekend of May 15-16. We will have a quilt exhibit and host the **African-American Museum's** exhibit on the **Underground Railroad** entitled ***"Cries and Whispers."*** Our summer exhibit in June-August will expand on this theme and include artifacts from other wars in addition to the Civil War. From **August 25-November 10,** our exhibit will be on the ***"Harvest Home"*** and for

Continued on page 13.

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday • May 19 • 6 PM
UM Perry Building
330 Packard (at Division)

The Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper will be held **Wednesday, May 19** at 6 PM at the **UM Perry Building,** 330 Packard (at Division). The University will be re-dedicating this building that day and we will be participating in the events as well as hosting our meeting. 662-9092.

SUSAN KOSKY

Saline From Early Settlement Through The 20th Century

Sue Kosky speaking to WCHS on Saline. Photo: Susan Wineberg

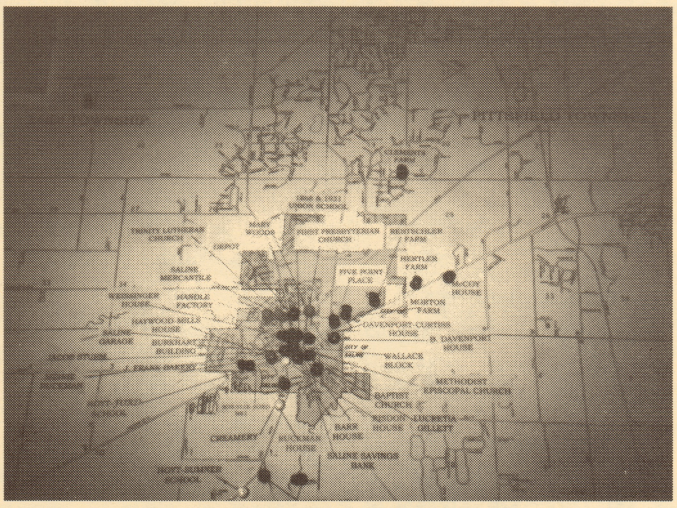
Over 50 people turned out on a cold spring day at the Saline District Library, Sunday March 21, to hear Susan Kosky speak about her recently published book in the Arcadia Series on Saline. Sue is a board member of the WCHS, a graduate in the Historic Preservation Program at Eastern Michigan University, and a retired nurse. She is currently managing our gift shop and also an avid volunteer in our garden. She and her husband Tom live in a Greek Revival house in Saline Township and have an enchanting orchard of antique apples and plums which I've been privileged to visit and partake of.

"The slides presented here today are taken from the photographs used in my book. Most of them were reproduced from the extensive collection of the **Saline Area Historical Society** and some from the WCHS's Judge Ross Campbell slide collection. While photography wasn't in general use until the mid-nineteenth century, there are photographs taken of people and buildings which existed in the early nineteenth century. When I talk about Saline, I'm referring to the Saline **area** composed of the four townships of **Lodi, Pittsfield, York** and **Saline**. This map, done by my friend, **Jose Saborio**, is a modern map and could only be reproduced to this size, so some of you in the back won't be able to see the detail. I have placed labels of the businesses and homes shown in the slide presentation, so you can come up at the end and take a closer look at the map. The area colored in yellow shows the current city of Saline.

The Saline River was named by early French fur traders and explorers, who derived its name from salt reserves found in the area. Before pioneer settlement in the 1820s, the French, Native Americans and many animals were attracted to the region because of the salt. Pioneer settlement in Saline took place from approximately the 1820s to the 1850s. Pioneers came primarily from the eastern states, many by way of the Erie Canal, which was completed in 1825. Access to the area using Native American trails and the Saline River encouraged settlement. The slides will look at the settlement period, agriculture (which until the mid-twentieth century was the backbone of Saline), the schools, the community (as exemplified by the architecture of its homes and churches), growth in the nineteenth century, the community in the first part of the twentieth century, and lastly, two experiments in agriculture.

My first slide is of an old Saline post card saying, "Well, here I am in Saline Michigan enjoying the sights." Next I have a Native American map, taken from W.B. Hinsdale's 1927 book, **The Indians of Washtenaw County**. Broken lines represent the six Native American trails that passed through the townships of Lodi, Pittsfield, York, and Saline. The line from Section 13 in Pittsfield Township going southwest to Section 19 in Saline Township is the **Sauk Trail** that eventually became the Detroit to Chicago Road. The line crossing York Township is the trail to Monroe, Toledo, and Sandusky Bay. Just below the current City of Saline (now Saline-Macon Road) salt springs and remnants of a Native American village or campsite were found. **Orange Risdon** documented Native American villages on his 1825 survey map, the closest to Saline at that time being in the Macon area.

Salt reserves have been documented on two known area sites: **8784 Saline-Macon Road,** once the **Ruckman-Finch** farm and **550 S. Ann Arbor,** once the home of **A. W. Barr.** Mr. Barr found Na-



This map shows that the Saline area encompasses parts of Lodi, Saline Pittsfield and York townships. Photo: Susan Wineberg

tive American artifacts on his property, however the location of burial grounds or a village has never been found.

Saline's first settler, **Orange Risdon** (1786-1876) was born in Rupert, Vermont on December 28, 1786. As a young man he studied navigation and surveying, then worked as a surveyor and on a Great Lakes ship. Risdon came to Michigan in 1823 and apparently liked the Saline area enough to eventually make it his home. The U.S. Congress, on a motion by Father Gabriel Richard in 1824, voted $3,000.00 for the survey of the Detroit to Chicago Road. Orange Risdon was hired to do the surveying, providing better access to areas that were eventually to be settled. **Sally Newland Risdon** from Wilton, New York, married Orange Risdon in Stillwater, New York in October 1817. They were the parents of six children when they finally settled in Saline 1829. The Risdons were very active in the community, and among other things built a silkworm factory at 111 N. Ann Arbor Street; the building was demolished in 1957.

In 1824, Risdon was among the first to obtain property in Saline Township. In 1829 he built a Federal-style clapboard house for his wife and children. The house, in addition to sheltering the family, was used as a post office, an inn, a store, and was the location of the first township meeting. It was also rumored that the house sheltered slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad. Originally sited on a hill that is now part of Oakwood Cemetery, it has since been moved to 210 W. Henry Street.

Orange Risdon is celebrated as the founder of Saline. When he returned to the area in 1824, he purchased 160 acres of land in the NE ¼ of Section 1 in Saline Township. Much of Risdon's land was eventually donated for schools, churches, and the Oakwood cemetery. North-south roads to Ann Arbor, Tecumseh, and Monroe crossed the Chicago Road, making an ideal site for settlement. Platted by Risdon in 1832 to be six city blocks with the Chicago Road as its main street, the hamlet was officially called Saline, named after the river running through it. In 1838 the plat was recorded.

The 1856 Hoyt-Sumner School moved by Henry Ford in 1943. Photo courtesy Susan Kosky.

Many of the buildings constructed during the settlement period were built in the **Greek Revival Style,** popular in the U.S. from about 1820 to as late as 1860. One of these is the **Ruckman House**, which incorporated the original plank road tollhouse located on Macon Road south of Saline. A tollgate was operated on the bridge until the late 1880s. The 1864 Saline Township plat map shows salt springs on the property. In 1865 a company was formed that unsuccessfully attempted to manufacture salt from the springs. In 1943 Harry Finch, grandson of Eden Ruckman, discovered the old springs on the farm.

Another Greek Revival house was built by Orrin Parsons in 1829 and is believed to be the first house built in the current boundaries of Saline Township on the plank Saline-Monroe Road (Mooreville Road). He also built a sawmill in 1827 (with his brother, Chester), and this gristmill in 1836. A brickyard that made bricks for Saline's early buildings was operated on the farm. Orrin Parsons and his wife were the parents of six children. According to rumor, a secret underground tunnel on the property sheltered slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad.

Among Saline's first commercial buildings were its mills. Enlarged in 1842, **Parson's Mill** was later known as the Friis & Minnett or Saline Mills. **Fannie Friis** operated the mill for more than forty years, and was entered in *Ripley's Believe it or Not* as the country's only female miller. The **Schuyler Mill,** now Weller's, is located at 555 W. Michigan Avenue. This Greek Revival gristmill was built in 1845 by **David Schuyler Haywood** west of the hamlet of Saline on the plank Chicago Road near the Saline River. A community developed around the mill known as **Barnegat**, named for Haywood's hometown, Barnegat, New Jersey. In addition to homes, businesses such a blacksmith shop, cooper shop, an ashery, a sawmill, Charles McKays's combined hardware and tin shop, and a weaving shop developed around the mill. The once booming settlement of Barnegat deteriorated in the first half of the twentieth century. According to one theory this was, in part, due to a hill being leveled between Barnegat and Saline, making access to Saline easier for consumers. Henry Ford removed most of the old buildings after he purchased the mill and water rights in 1935.

The Brassow family at work, illustrating the agricultural history of the Saline area. Courtesy Susan Kosky.

Another commercial build-

ing was the **Halfway Inn** which was located half way between Saline and Clinton on the Detroit to Chicago Road across from what is now the Polar Bear Bar. This inn was one of several stagecoach stops along the road, including Alfred Miller's 1834 Exchange Hotel and Leonard Miller's 1826 hotel in Saline.

Churches played an important role in the development of every village in Michigan and Saline was no exception. The **Baptist Church** was organized in 1831 and met in the home of Deacon Jesse Stephen. The parsonage was built in 1833, and the first church was constructed in 1837 on the corner of E. Henry and Adrian (S. Ann Arbor) Streets.

The Baptist Parsonage, one of Saline's early homes, was built in the Greek Revival style in 1833. **George Matthew Adams**, a nationally syndicated news columnist and author, was born in the parsonage in 1878. **Henry Ford**, a close friend of Adams, purchased the house and moved it to Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan, in 1937.

The **Methodist Episcopal Church** community originally met in area homes and once a month received a visit from the Methodist preacher who stopped in Saline on his four hundred mile route called the "Tecumseh circuit." In his diary, **Rev. Elijah Pilcher** wrote, "At night my greatcoat made my bed, my saddle and my saddle bags my pillow. The wolves howled most hideously most of the night." The first church, built in the early 1830s was a wood frame building that was struck by lightning in 1836, killing two members of the congregation. An interim "mud church" was used until this New England style wood building was constructed in 1837.

This **1856 PLAT MAP** of Saline from the Bechler, Wenig and Co. Atlas of Washtenaw County helps to visualize the hamlet as it was in the mid-nineteenth century.

Homes, churches, and businesses gradually formed the community of Saline. In 1848 Haywood's addition stretched the hamlet to the west. The surrounding townships of Lodi, Pittsfield, York, and Saline gradually became a patchwork of farmsteads, cultivated fields, and woods. Country schools began to dot the area. Up until mid-nineteenth century farmers engaged in subsistence farming, growing and making what each family needed to survive, and sharing or bartering with neighbors if there was an excess in production.

The 1876 Curtiss-Davenport house in downtown Saline, a landmark along Michigan Avenue. Courtesy Susan Kosky.

Surrounding the hamlet of Saline were the farms that, with the advent of the industrial revolution in the United States in the nineteenth century, went from subsistence agriculture to business operations such as dairy farming, orchards, raising cattle, sheep and poultry, and grain crops.

The **Hertler Farm** was located at 7500 E. Michigan Avenue in Pittsfield Township. Gottlib Hertler purchased the Greek Revival house, built in the first half of the nineteenth century, from Edgar J. Bickford in February 1890 for $7,110. Mr. Hertler (the name means shepherd in German) raised sheep, cattle, hay, and was Vice President of the Saline Savings Bank. This farm survives today but is in danger of being demolished and the house is available to be moved. The **Morton Farm** was located at 7876 Michigan Avenue. The farmhouse was built c.1880. James Morton began farming here in 1917 and later his son, Robert, raised poultry here. In 1982 the land was sold and the farmstead replaced with the Saline Shopping Center. All that remains of the farm is a former chicken house, now a real estate establishment.

Vesta Mills, beloved piano teacher and descendant of old pioneer family. Courtesy Susan Kosky.

The Rentschler Farm, sited on Michigan Avenue east of the main business district, is now a farm museum run by the Saline Area Historical Society. Emanual Rentschler purchased the farm in 1901 and the old farmhouse was replaced with the current Queen Anne style house. Watch for their re-opening in May. The **Clements Farmstead** located in Lodi Township, was most likely built by Thomas Wood c.1850, and eventually purchased by William Clements in1886. The farm remains in the Clements family today.

Several local farmers raised sheep in the nineteenth and twentieth century, as shown in this 1910 Saline postcard. In fact, Washtenaw County was the leading wool producing county in the state during the late nineteenth century. Not only were farmsteads increasing in number outside the hamlet, but also homes and businesses within the hamlet increased. This is an **1864 PLAT MAP** of Saline from the Bechler, Wenig and Co. **Atlas of Washtenaw County**. It shows the 1848 Haywood's Addition, the first formal addition to the hamlet. The community had grown considerably and now had several residences, three churches and several businesses. In 1866 contiguous portions of Lodi, Pittsfield, York, and Saline Townships incorporated to form the Village of Saline.

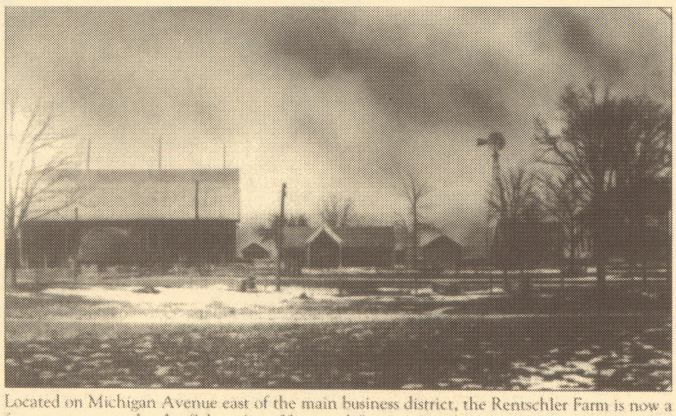
Two things happened in the second half of the nineteenth century that influenced the lives of Salinians. One, previously mentioned, was the industrial revolution in the United States that made possible tools to create new styles in

architecture, new businesses, and made life on the farm a bit easier. The second was the coming of the railroad in 1870 that opened up a new world to Saline, and brought new products and potential to the area. Much growth took place such as the building of new homes in the Gothic, Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne styles. This period also saw the construction of the first Union School, the arrival of the interurban, and new businesses related to farming as Saline became a principal agricultural shipping point. A. H. Risdon's Addition to the east, Bennett's Addition near the railroad tracks, and Mill's Addition near the original town were platted soon after the coming of the railroad. The influence of German immigrants was seen in schools, a German park on Bennett Street, social organizations, churches, and banking.

Let's look at some of the homes and churches that made up the Saline community during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Civil War divided the nation in the second half of the nineteenth century and many Salinians fought in that war. Houses built in this period include the lovely **McCoy House**, a *ca.* 1860 brick Italianate house on the Chicago Road in Pittsfield Township. It was rumored to have a secret room that was used to accommodate slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad. The 1833 Greek Revival home built by John Haywood was purchased in 1862 by the Mills family and occupied until Vesta Mills' death in 1948. Known as the **Haywood-Mills** house, it unfortunately was left to deteriorate, and in 1968 was demolished. Mills Road was named for the family. **Vesta Mills** was a talented piano teacher who was active in community affairs. Miss Mills graduated from the University of Michigan School of Music in 1896. She taught piano from 1893 to 1947.

The **Beverly** and **Emily Davenport** home (1873) on E. Henry Street was built for $3,500.00 for the son of William H. and Zilpha Parsons Davenport. **William H. Davenport** was a prominent businessman who established the Citizens Bank of Saline. He married Zilpha Parsons, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Orrin Parsons. Beverly Davenport was involved in banking with his father. William built the **Davenport-Curtiss house (1876)** at 300 E Michigan Avenue. Built in the Second Empire style for $8,000.00, the house and two ornate carriage barns occupy an entire block of fenced, landscaped lawn and is a Saline landmark. Along with the Beverly Davenport House, it is a part of the **E. Michigan Avenue Historic District.** In 1932 the Curtiss family purchased the house when Mr. Curtiss took over as president of the Citizens Bank following the Davenports.



Located on Michigan Avenue east of the main business district, the Rentschler Farm is now a farm museum run by the Saline Area Historical Society. Matthew Rentschler purchased the farm in 1901, and the old farmhouse was replaced with the current Queen Anne style house. The farmhouse and 11 outbuildings show how farm families lived in the twentieth century and how their hard work contributed to the community of Saline.

The Rentschler Farm now a museum of early 20th century farm life. Courtesy Susan Kosky

The **home of John and Catherine Barr** and their sons, George and William was on S. Adrian St. (S. Ann Arbor Street). In the late nineteenth century **John Barr and Son** had a "Sorghum, Apple Jelly, and Cider Mill" behind their home. They made cider jelly and shipped it all over the eastern states. We have a photograph of **George Barr** in 1950 with the high wheeler bicycle he rode in his youth.

The **Weissinger Home** is located at 102 Russell Street. J. Fredrick Weissinger, who lived there in the late nineteenth century, was a cabinetmaker who had a furniture and undertaker business at 112 W. Michigan Avenue. Mr. Weissinger is the great-grandfather of WCHS board member, Patty Creal's husband Bob Creal.

Many churches were also built in this period. **Trinity Lutheran Church** at 195 E. Michigan Avenue is one of three Saline churches on the **National Register of Historic Places.** It was built for $5600.00 in 1872, making it the oldest extant church in Saline. Its interesting architecture incorporates elements of both the Gothic and Italianate styles. Many of Saline's prominent German American residents were members of the church community that was formally organized in May 1865. **Trinity Lutheran School** near the church existed during the first half of the twentieth century. This school, along with the German School near the hamlet of Benton, taught German. In 1905 the **Baptist Church** was built on the southeast corner of N. Ann Arbor Street. The building was eventually used as a hospital, furniture store, funeral home, library, and engineering firm. We have a photo of it on a post card dated 1913.

The **First Presbyterian Church** at 143 E. Michigan Avenue, was one of the earliest established churches in the community. The congregation organized in May 1831 and met in area homes before building their first frame church in 1842. The current church was built in 1898 in the Romanesque Revival style and was designed by the Detroit firm of William C. Rohns and Frederick H. Spier. The **Methodist Episcopal Church** lo-

cated on S. Ann Arbor Street, was constructed in 1899. Built of brick and cut stone, it is a handsome example of Victorian Romanesque architecture. It was the fourth Methodist Church building to be erected Saline. (**St Paul United Church of Christ** is located at 122 W. Michigan Avenue.)

Blacks also made their homes in Saline. **Mary Woods** is shown reading to children. Her family's heritage is part of the African-American history of Saline. Her grandparents were slaves who traveled to Canada where they were free. They moved to Saline in 1867 with their child, Nancy who eventually married Henry Morris, a highly respected carpenter. There were ten children from that union. Nancy was honored as Michigan Mother of the Year in 1948. Their daughter, Mary, met Paul Woods in Albion where she went to teach. They married in 1928 and were the parents of eight successful children. The family once lived at 201 Clark Street, a house which used some of the beams from an African-American church located at East Bennett and North Harris Streets. Another building, the carriage barn at Carl Weidman's home at 210 North Harris Street, was a meetinghouse of the Black community in the 1870s.

The first school in the hamlet was a one-room frame building that stood on Adrian Street (now S. Ann Arbor Street where the Calico Cat Gift Shop stands). The second was a brick common school built in 1855 on Adrian and Henry Streets. Surrounding Saline, several country schools were built. We'll look at just a few.

The Benton School, located west of town on the north side of Michigan Avenue near Case Road, was one of many rural schools built in the townships around Saline in the nineteenth century. The school has been moved, and is now used as a farm building. The students lived in or near the hamlet of Benton, which had a post office, blacksmith shop, saw mill, church, dance hall, and two schools. In 1895 a German parochial school associated with St. James Church was located across the road from the Benton School where classes were held part of each day. Many children attended both schools. Erma Castle, a teacher, and Edward Kuebler are pictured in front of **Rentschler School,** now a home on the northwest corner of Bethel Church and Alber Roads. Ms. Castle was shot to death by Bob Warner, a jealous admirer, who was sentenced to five years in jail.

The 1845 Schuler Mills gristmill purchased by Henry Ford for his Village Industries and now Weller's Carriage House. Courtesy Susan Kosky

The **Hoyt-Sumner School** was erected c.1856 on Macon Road in Saline Township. It closed in 1917 and the area children went to school in the city of Saline. It was used occasionally as a public meetinghouse until 1943 when it was purchased by Henry Ford and reconstructed on its present location, 600 W. Michigan Avenue.

Replacing the 1855 Common School, the Italianate brick **Union School** pictured here was built on North Ann Arbor Street in **1868**. It had classrooms on the first and second floors plus two laboratories for chemistry and one for physics. The third floor housed an auditorium and music room. Oil lighting was used until 1907 when electricity was installed. Outhouses were used until sewer lines were put in between 1912 and 1916.

This 1930 photo shows the construction of the new high school (Second Union School) on N. Ann Arbor Street. The building was completed in 1931. We have a nice photograph of William Austin and Charles Miller landscaping the new Union School. The Saline Area Historical Society has a pamphlet listing some 50 country schools with a map showing their locations.

Business grew in the 19th century as well. **Jacob Sturm's Harness Shop** was situated across W. Michigan Avenue from ***The Reporter*** where the city parking lot is now located. Jacob's brother, Louis, arrived from Germany around 1860 to join the business making harnesses and carriages. Between the buildings occupied by Jacob Sturm and LeBaron & Nissley was the "fire department," a little shed that held two or three dozen buckets for water. A large cistern was built on Ann Arbor Street, but was only useful if the pump was in working order and the key could be found. The fire on May 26, 1881 that leveled twenty-two buildings to the ground prompted the village to look into better fire protection.

Photography became a lucrative profession in the second half of the 19th century and was even open to women! **Lucretia Gillett** (b.1820) moved to Saline with her father and mother in 1858 and her portrait was done in 1868. After nearly thirty years as Saline's premier photographer, Lucretia sold her photographic studio moved to California. This is an advertisement for Lucretia Gillett's business. The ad states that she was able to create color pictures by using oil, watercolors, and pastels.

The second major factor in Saline's growth was the arrival of the railroad. **The Detroit, Hillsdale and Indiana Railroad** came to Saline in 1870. The Saline Depot, built the same year on N. Ann Arbor Street, became a necessary component in the daily life of many area merchants, farmers, and passengers. The railroad provided passenger and freight service, and opened up the small village of Saline to a larger world. A wooden water tower, stockyards, and a wool barn were located near the depot. Although Saline was reported to be the largest rail-shipping center in Southern Michigan in 1875, the line went bankrupt that year and the line was sold or leased several times until 1961 when the railroad was dissolved and the Depot closed. The advent of the interurban, automobiles, and trucks also influenced the decline of the railroad.

The Saline Depot became important to Salinians not only for commercial purposes, but also for its passenger service and telegraph office. After it closed in 1961 it housed other businesses and eventually was given to the Saline Historic District Commission by the Zahn family in 1980.

It was restored as a museum and meeting place by the Saline Area Historical Society and is in active use today.

On **July 4, 1876** Saline took part in the nation's centennial with a grand parade led by the village band with the G.A.R. and patriotic floats coming behind. A dance floor with a canopy of sapling trees was built across from the Presbyterian Church where a dance was held. The highlight of the celebration was the display of fireworks accompanied by music from the Fife and Drum Corps.

Band members that led the Fourth of July parade in 1876 rode in a bandwagon drawn by two teams of white horses. The bandwagon was built in the shape of a serpent with carved, gilded scales on its sides. The driver rode near the serpent's head and the band members rode on seats in the body and tail. The Schairer brothers who owned a wagon shop in Saline built this special bandwagon.

In this picture of the southwest corner of uptown Saline, the 1872 brick Italianate **Burkhart Building** can be seen to the west (right) of the McKinnon building on the corner. The Burkhart family ran a dry goods business here. Around 1901 Mr. Burkhart's sons Fred and George continued the business under the name Burkhart Brothers. Their sister Katherine worked in the family store before her marriage to William Cody, a relative of "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Buffalo Bill visited Katherine and William on their farm west of town where St. Andrew Catholic Church now stands.

Minnie Ruckman, according to an undated article, operated her **Saline Greenhouse** for more than half a century. Her stepfather, Lucius S. Pierce, built the greenhouse on the lot with his residence. Miss Ruckman assisted him in the care of the plants and continued the business after his death in 1914.

Mr. J. Frank in 1878 built the structure that housed his bakery and according to ads in the 1878 ***Saline Standard*** newspaper, it housed a bakery and confectionary store "with a large stock of fresh candies on hand." By 1913 the bakery was run by relatives, the Albers. We have a nice photo of the interior of the bakery in that year.

Ice Cutting with a horse drawn cutter was a common winter chore. The ice may have been used in local households, or for making ice cream at Alber's Bakery.

After a fire in 1881 the **Wallace Block,** located in the first block off E. Michigan Avenue on the east side of S. Ann Arbor Street, was rebuilt in brick in 1887. It was named for builder, Daniel Wallace, a stagecoach driver and landowner. On the left is the fire garage, and to the right of it, **L.M. Thorne's Cash Grocery** and other businesses that comprised the ground level. The Opera House was on the second floor. Pictured here is Mr. Thorn making a delivery in front of the Observer building before Michigan Avenue was paved in 1924. Notice the plank sidewalks! Rural Free Delivery began in 1896 and **Albert Niethammer** was the first rural postman in the Saline Post Office. The **Chicago Road (Michigan Avenue)** seen here looking west in 1897 was critical to this endeavor. Prior to the paving of the Chicago Road in 1924, the city kept down dust on its streets with the help of a horse-drawn water wagon. The water was loaded at the Saline River.

We also have a nice photograph of workmen stringing telephone lines on W. Henry and S. Ann Arbor Streets. In 1898 the first telephone lines were strung along existing telegraph poles.

Orange Risdon (1786–1876) was born in Rupert, Vermont on December 28, 1786. As a young man he studied navigation and surveying. He then worked as a surveyor, assessor, and as a navigator on a Great Lakes ship. Congress, on a motion by Father Gabriel Richard in 1824, voted $3,000 for the survey of the Detroit to Chicago Road. Orange Risdon was hired to do the surveying. The survey of the road, now US-12, along with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, provided better access to areas of Michigan that were eventually to be settled.

lly Newland Risdon, from Wilton, w York, married Orange Risdon in llwater, New York in October 1817. ey were the parents of six children the time they finally settled in line in 1829. Sally and Orange sdon built a silkworm factory at 111 Ann Arbor Street; the building was molished in 1957.

Orange Risdon and wife, Sally Newland Risdon, the founders of Saline. Courtesy Susan Kosky.

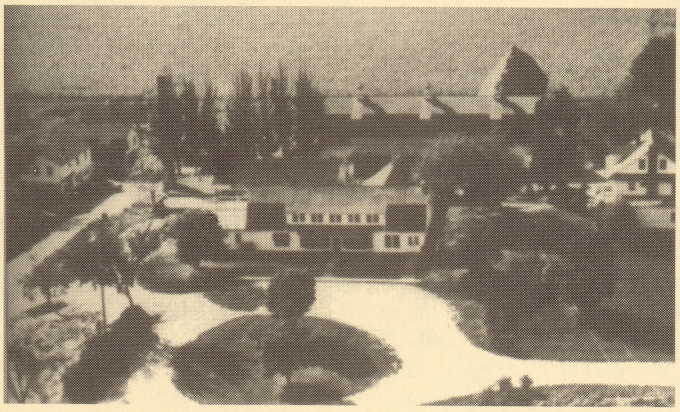
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

New modes of transportation influenced change in the first half of the twentieth century. The interurban, in business until 1923, went to Ypsilanti and points beyond. New businesses such as gas stations, garages, and tourist cabins sprang up as a result of the paving of the Chicago Road (US-12) in 1925 and the availability of motorized vehicles. New homes in the Colonial Revival and Bungalow styles were built. Perhaps because of the agriculture-based economy, Saline made it through the Depression intact. In 1931 the village became a city.

Old Maude (an interurban car) represented the transition from the nineteenth century. The interurban transported people and goods along Michigan Avenue from 1899 to 1923. The electric interurban trolley operated on a branch of the line linking Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Jackson. Since Saline was a dead end stop from Ypsilanti, "Old Maude" made a turnaround near Hall Street for its return trip. Fares were a penny a mile. The Detroit Edison Power Station was located at the northeast corner of US-12 and Harris Street, where the fire station

now stands.

Saline had a semi-pro **baseball team** and we have a nice photograph taken in 1908. The **Saline Garage** stood where the parking lot next to St. Paul's Church is now located. Pictured from left to right are Leo Fitzpatrick, W. Briggs, and Walter Cook. George V. Cook established The Saline Garage around 1912. His son, Walter, later ran it until his death in 1940.



An aerial view of Saline Valley Farms in the 1930s. Courtesy Susan Kosky.

The **Saline Savings Bank** was chartered on May 23, 1908 and first operated in a building at 109 W. Michigan Avenue. This building was constructed in 1917 on the southwest corner of Michigan Avenue and S. Ann Arbor Street, where the McKinnon building once stood beside the Burkhart Building. In the early years some bank documents were printed in both English and German.

Saline Mercantile on N. Ann Arbor Street was in business from 1917 to 1973. They operated a grain elevator, lumber, paint, and hardware business near the railroad tracks and we have a photo of the grain elevator. Pictured here is the **Lumber & Hardware Division of Saline Mercantile** showing the W. Bennett Street side of the business. The **C.F. Bracey Handle Factory** operated in the 1930s and 1940s on W. Bennett Street. The factory produced hammers, handles, baseball bats (including the Louisville Slugger) and other wood products.

Volz Five Point Place was a White Star Service Station at 401 E. Michigan Avenue built in 1929 and purchased around 1930 by Chris and Lydia Volz. White Star Gasoline was the precursor to Mobilgas. Known as Five Point Place, there was also a restaurant and tourist cabins on the property. Tourist cabins, built in 1933, were located behind Five Point Place. The cabins rented for $5.00 per night for two people. Showers and toilets were attached to the rear of the restaurant.

The April 13, 1944 ***Saline Observer*** announced that the Universal Die Casting and Manufacturing Company had purchased the Saline Creamery building from the Citizens Bank. A brick industrial building was built around the Saline Creamery. The Creamery roof is still visible if you are standing across Monroe Street. Employing seventy-five people, the company designed their own machines to make small die-castings.

TWO EXPERIMENTS IN AGRICULTURE

Two agricultural experiments characterized 20th century farming and employment in Saline. Formed in the post-Depression years, **Saline Valley Farms** and **Ford Village Industries** gave jobs and hope to many area residents. In the 1930s, millionaire **Harold Gray** bought hundred acres of land with farmhouse and barn and with Harold Vaughn built Saline Valley Farms, a cooperative farm venture. The community later expanded with more homes and buildings. The project lasted for approximately twenty years and fell on hard times after World War II when area jobs were more plentiful. An aerial view of Saline Valley Farms shows one of two non-traditional (at least for Saline) agricultural projects that existed during the 1930s and 1940s. We have many pictures of life on this farm and a large collection is also at the Bentley Library. There are photos of planting potatoes, the cannery which processed the fruit and vegetables grown at the farm, the chickens raised for both meat and eggs, the dairy products which were delivered by truck to outlying areas such as Birmingham, Berkley, Highland Park, Royal Oak, Ann Arbor, and of course, to Saline. In addition to hard work, families took time to socialize. Here residents are shown enjoying the man-made lake and picnic grounds on the property. Dances and parties were held in the recreation hall.

A second agricultural experiment was **Ford's Village Industries,** established on the site of the old Schuyler Mill. Due to its location near farmland and its source of waterpower for processing, **Henry Ford** purchased it in the 1930s to become part of a personal experiment where he attempted to provide an environment where agriculture and industry could coexist. The vernacular style mill was moved onto a new foundation, the water wheel removed, and two rooms, one with a generator, were added. Ford's own style of Greek Revival exterior trim was added. On the property he built an extractor plant for soybeans and a pump house. A new dam was built along with a millpond and a new millrace. Soybeans, grown locally, were processed in the facility to be used for plastics and animal food. During World War II the plant was put into wartime production. Ford sold the business in 1946. We have a wonderful photo of **Henry Ford** testing the durability of a car using plastic made from soy by hitting it with a sledgehammer!

Henry Ford's Village Industries project unquestionably made an impact on Saline in the 1930s and 1940s. In the second half of the 20th century Saline had another opportunity to be associated with Ford history. Pictured here are Harvey Firestone, Henry Ford, and Thomas Edison in Ford's private car, the Fairlane, some time in the first part of the 20th century. This railcar was stored in Saline for security purposes from 1995-1996. In 1998 it found a home at Greenfield Village.

In 1943 the **Hoyt-Sumner School** was moved from Macon Road and sited across from the Schuyler Mill to become part of Ford's Village Industries project. Due to Henry Ford's poor health, the Ford Motor Company sold the school along with the mill in 1946. In 1947 the property was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Parsons and remodeled as a residence. It is now a business.

Life has been good to Saline over its 150-year history and Saline was and still is a good place to call home.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Wander Washtenaw

"Wander Washtenaw" is planned for **Saturday, May 15 (10-4 PM)** and **Sunday, May 16** (1-4 PM). Sixteen sites will be open in Washtenaw County and your entry is by one ticket. The **Washtenaw County Historical Consortium** is a new group actively promoting historic sites in Washtenaw County. Last year they produced a throw with 19 of the historic sites featured. All proceeds will be distributed among the participating historical sites. You can visit historic homes, mills, churches, schoolhouses and a blacksmith shop. Tickets are $8.00 in advance, $10.00 at the door and $15.00 for families.

In Ann Arbor, visit our **Museum on Main Street, the Earhart Manor, Kempf House,** and the **Parker Mill County Park.** In **Dexter** their **Museum** and the **Webster Township Complex** will be open. **Manchester** will feature **the John F. Schneider Blacksmith Shop** and **Sharon Mills County Park** and in **Milan the Hack House Museum** will be open. In **Saline** the **Rentschler Farm** will welcome you and in **Ypsilanti** visit the **Michigan Firehouse Museum,** the **Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Collection** and the **Historical Museum.** Special events range from a Chili Cook-Off at the Ypsi Fire Museum to Civil War exhibits in Dexter, an antique car display in Milan and johnnycake baking at the Parker Mill (yum).

Tickets are available at the door of each participant or at the AA Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Museum on Main Street in Ann Arbor (500 N. Main), Dexter Pharmacy, Village Gifts of Manchester, Schultz Motors in Milan, Busch's Valu Land in Saline and the Ypsilanti sites on the tour. Come one, come all and have a ball!

Program Schedule 2004

Vice President and Program Chair **Ralph Beebe** has done a fantastic job of planning interesting programs and venues. All programs are held the third Sunday of the month at 2 PM. The talks are free and open to the public. Members receive a post card before the meeting with instructions on how to reach the lecture. Light refreshments are served after the lecture. This is the last lecture of our series this year. Look for us again in September.

SUNDAY • APRIL 18 • 2 PM
COURTHOUSE SQUARE BUILDING
100 S. FOURTH AVE. • ANN ARBOR

Ray Detter, Louisa Pieper and **Grace Shackman** will talk about **The Downtown Street Exhibit Program** that is getting rave reviews all over the U.S. and winning awards as well. You've probably noticed the glass markers in the sidewalks around town with old photographs of buildings no longer standing. A new group of 'frames' as they are called, which are scattered around the campus and deal with University history, was dedicated in July.

WEDNESDAY • MAY 19 • 6 PM
ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK

Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper will be held at the old **Perry School,** now the UM Perry Building, 330 Packard Street. The University will be re-dedicating the building that day and we will be participating in the events as well as hosting our meeting. Beverages and dinner ware provided. Bring a dish to pass for eight.

Call **734-662-9092.**

SUSAN WINEBERG

Around The Town

The Ann Arbor Historic District Commission (of which I am a member) held its annual retreat last month and a primary topic was our relationship to the Cobblestone Farm and the **Cobblestone Farm Association (CFA).** We learned that our role is written into the ordinance and that City Parks Department Staff without prior approval from the HDC made several unattractive, non-historical changes to the exterior. We are working on getting these items corrected and also in helping the CFA re-open the farmhouse, which has been closed to events due to the city dropping its liability insurance. We are hoping to get these groups working together again. The CFA just celebrated its 30th anniversary and the city should be proud of this group and honor their work in preserving this gem of an 1840s building.

The latest issue of The ***Cobblestone Farm News*** reports on their ongoing problems with the city but celebrates their 30 years of existence on work in promoting the restoration and interpretation of the farm and its era. The CFA is still looking for volunteers and if you're interested contact them at **734-994-2928.** They also quote from a history of ***East Ann Arbor*** by **Mary E. Maury Cruse** which appears on the **Pittsfield Township website, www.pittsfieldhistory.com.** She writes about growing up along Milan (Platt) and Packard Roads and the Mallett Creek Schoolhouse, which was the first schoolhouse in Washtenaw County! Another interesting fact is that as late as 1955 Packard Road was a two-lane road with gravel shoulders.

The HDC also has a new member. **Donna Tope,** an attorney, has lived in the historic 1909 J. Karl Malcolm house in Burns Park since 1977 and has been working with the Washtenaw Hill Historic District Study Committee to get the area designated a historic district. Tope also served for six years on the Ann Arbor Planning Commission in the mid-1980s. She will be a

Continued on page 10.

Around The Town

Continued from page 9.

great asset to the HDC and we welcome her!

The **Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County** holds its last lecture on **Sunday, April 25** with **Elaine M. Kuhn,** Librarian of Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne Indiana discussing "***Using the Periodical Source Index: An Insider's Guide to PERSI.***" The meeting begins at 1:30 at the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center, just off East Huron River Drive at Clark. Look for signs in Parking Lot "P." Visit their website at **www.hvcn.org/info/gswc** or call **734-483-2799.**

Karl Grube of the **Bonisteel Masonic Library** informs us that the library continues to enhance its website and has new pages on architecture, art, music, libraries and poetry. The AA Masonic Temple is scheduled to be wired for 10 drop outlets. If you'd like to know more, contact Karl at **karlgrube@hotmail.com**. or call **734-878-0639.**

The **Lower Town Historic District Study Committee** has re-issued the **1974 Map of Lower Town** which was designed during Ann Arbor's Sesquicentennial. We are selling these maps in our Museum Shop, so if you are interested, come on down and buy one! The creation of this newest historic district on the north side of the Huron River has not yet reached city council as the final report is still being prepared. Look for news of it soon though. This area contains some of our oldest houses as we reported in our February issue.

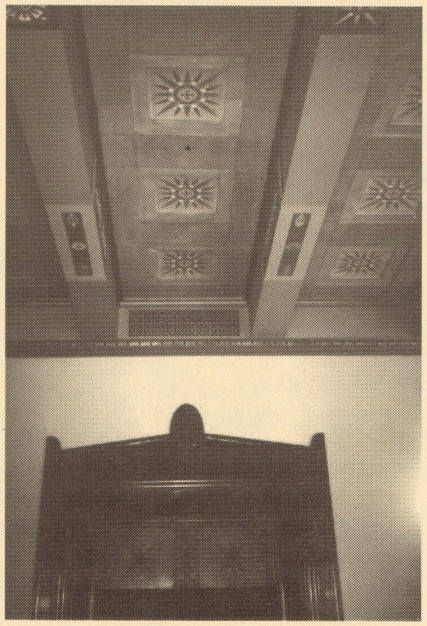
Save the date of **Saturday, May 8** for the dedication of the **Ford Gallery of Ann Arbor Founders** panels at the **Michigan Theater. Louisa Pieper** has done a fabulous job of writing about the 19th and 20th century movers and shakers of Ann Arbor and the text will be copiously illustrated as well. This endeavor has been underwritten by the Ford Motor Company and will be along the walls leading from the main theater to the screening room.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Around The University

The spectacular restoration and re-opening of Hill Auditorium in January now has some competition. On **Thursday, April 1**, the University rededicated the **Rackham Building** which has also undergone an expensive ($27 million) restoration. Construction began in 1936 and was completed in 1938 to a design by **William Kapp** of **Smith, Hinchman and Grylls.** (their successor, the SmithGroup, were the architects for the restoration). The community can now view the bold colors and intricate details that have emerged over the past four years of work. The building now has new elevators (boo hoo, the old ones were so cool), new offices for the dean, a restoration of the ceiling painting in the first floor lobby and the second floor reading rooms, and new draperies. Don't miss the brilliant blue wall in the staircases leading up to the second floor and the salmon colored rotunda upstairs as well. The colors are very bold!

Soon to follow in their footsteps will be the **Clements Library,** architect **Albert Kahn's** 1923 gem of an Italian palazzo. They will show off their newly restored ceiling, floor, carpets, draperies and woodwork at the first ever meeting of Clements Library Associates, to be held **Saturday, May 8** at 10:30 AM. I got a sneak preview and the staff is singing the praises of Saline-based company that is doing the work. This is the first time in its history that the Clements interior has been modified in any way since it opened to the public! The transformation of the ceiling from dark to light is worth the price of admission.



A detailed view of the ceiling in the lobby of Rackham. Photo: Susan Wineberg

The 1938 Rackham Building just recently re-opened after a $27 million restoration. Photo: Susan Wineberg

Yet another milestone is being celebrated at the restored 1854 **Detroit Observatory** which celebrates its **Sesquicentennial** at a special event on **Thursday, June 17 at** 4:30 PM. There will be a public ceremony on the front lawn followed by tours of the building. You can learn more at their website **www.DetroitObservatory.umich.edu** or by calling **734-763-2230.**

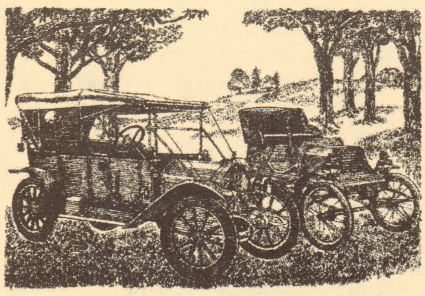
Not to be outdone, the former **Perry School** (1902, with a 1923 addition) will be rededicated in conjunction with our **Annual Meeting** on **Wednesday, May 19**. This $16 million project includes a new addition, interior demolition to construct new plumbing, heating, cooling, electrical, ventilation and fire protection systems. New windows were added as well as a barrier free entrance. The university purchased this building in 1965 (and I

The 1923 Clements Library almost ready for its close-up with its bare floors showing before the new carpeting arrives. Photo Susan Wineberg

worked there in 1969!) and didn't do much to it until this project started in 2002. Now they have cleaned the brick, restored the art glass windows and made the building sparkle. The building received an award in 2003 from the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission.

Although it is not a construction zone, the **Michigan League** is also celebrating! This building constructed for the women of the university is 75 years old this year and has at least 20 events planned ranging from a lecture series to an anniversary gala on **Saturday, May 22.** Check out their website **www.umich.edu/~league/program** for more details.

One more feather in The University's cap: the restoration of **Hill Auditorium** was cited in the "restored" section of the March/April 2004 issue of ***Preservation News***, the magazine of the **National Trust for Historic Preservation.** So, congratulations all around to the University for its fine job of preserving its historic fabric.



Some of the intricate detailing on the walls and ceilings of the Clements Library recently revealed by cleaning. Photo: Susan Wineberg.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Around The County

We heard too late to urge you to attend a workshop on the **historic bridges of Washtenaw County** that was held March 28 under the sponsorship of the **Washtenaw County Historic District Commission.** We hope you found out some other way and managed to go. Three bridges are endangered: the **Bell Road Bridge** in **Dexter Township** (now disassembled and sitting on the side of the river bank); the **Wilbur Road Bridge** in **Bridgewater Township**; and the **Judd Road Bridge** in **York Township**. The people hoping to save the Judd Road Bridge even took out a large ad in the ***Ann Arbor News*** hoping to stir up some interest and moola. The bridge is midway between Milan and Saline between Platt and Warner Roads. If you want to help them, contact **Loren Shook** at **734-439-8870.**

The **Saline Area Historical Society** has one more speaker in its series of educational meetings. On **Wednesday, April 21, Wallie Patrick,** Director of the Family History Library at the Ann Arbor Mormon Stake, will speak on Genealogy Research. The meeting is at 7:30 at the Saline Railroad Depot Museum, 402 N. Ann Arbor St., corner Bennett. It's free too! And don't forget the re-opening of the Rentschler Farm Museum on **Saturday, May 15,** 11-4 PM. This celebration of ***"Springtime on the Farm"*** will have live animals, demonstrations, tours and craft activities. Admission is $1.00 and there is free parking nearby. For more details, call **734-944-0442.** This also coincides with the "Wander Washtenaw" weekend (see details on this elsewhere in the newsletter).

And speaking of Saline, we learned at our last program on Sue Kosky's book on Saline that the **Saline Area District Library** will be hosting an exhibit of photographs on Saline history beginning **May 2.** They will also have old cars and models of historic buildings on display. We also learned that **Jim Cameron** will soon have a book out on the **Saline Valley Farms Community.** Look for it soon in your local bookstores.

Pat Majher of the Hack House in Milan alerted us about **Evelyn Gibbons, "the button lady,"** who has rearranged her antiques store at **5135 Plymouth Road** (kitty corner from the Dixboro General Store) so that she can display her extensive collection of vintage buttons. Evelyn has 40 years of experience in the button business and has loaned her materials to museums and been written about in magazines. To reach her, you can call **734-663-2277.** Pat also will be giving a tour of the **Hack House Museum** on **Sunday, April 18** at 2 PM under the auspices of the **Pittsfield Township Historical Society.** The Museum is at 775 County Street in Milan.

The last lecture in the guest speakers series put on by the **Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation** was on March 24 and featured Ypsilantians **Randy** and **Kathy Fettes** who own a decorative painting business called Rand & Co. Interiors. Their home will also be featured on the **Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation's Historic Homes Tour** on **August 22,** so plan ahead! For more information visit their website at **www.yhf.org.** The **YHF Annual Marker Awards Banquet** will be held on **Wednesday, May 26.** Contact them if you would like to nominate someone for an award. Awards are given for the restoration of a pre-1950 home within the city limits which has been appropriately maintained or rehabilitated, and kept its original siding, windows and porch details. If you have a nominee, con-

tact **Dan Randazzo** at **drandazzo@provide.net.**

Don Limpert of **Manchester** dropped us a note that he has a small private museum of Civil war and post war items that he shows by appointment. You can call him at **734-428-7400** to make an appointment to see his collection. There is no admission charge.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Beyond Washtenaw

The newspapers on March 5 were filled with pictures of the devastating fire that destroyed six commercial buildings in the historic district of downtown **Lake Orion**, a small community of 2800 located about 35 miles north of Detroit. The grease fire began in the kitchen of a popular restaurant. In 2001, Lake Orion was one of three communities selected to receive help from the **National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center**, which supports renovation and economic development in historic town centers. The storefronts, which dated from the 1890s, will be salvaged where possible and rebuilding will be done in a historical style. We wish them well.

Spring is the season for **homes tours** and we know of one in **Grosse Pointe Farms** highlighting the Dr. J. Stewart Hudson house built in 1936 by architect Hugh T. Keyes. This 15-room house with seven fireplaces is a Junior League project which will be open from **May 1-31** for $15. Call **313-884-1773** or visit **www.jldetroit.org** for more information. This is a fundraiser for the Junior League, which has given away almost $3 million to various projects.

The ***Detroit Free Press*** ran a week long series on the rebirth of the Midtown area of Detroit, highlighting both restoration and new construction projects in the area along Woodward and Cass between downtown and the New Center area. Of course many fabulous mansions did not make it through 35 years of neglect, but many have and are being restored. It is exciting to finally see some good news coming out of Detroit!

However, **Nancy Finegood,** Executive Director of the **Michigan Historic Preservation Network** alerted us, that the old 1897 **Wayne County Building** in downtown Detroit may soon be abandoned by the County. This building was second only to the Michigan State Capitol for its preservation and restoration in 1987 at a cost of $25 million. To abandon it now seems insane, especially with Governor Granholm's new emphasis on urban revitalization. Moving out of the city would be a travesty. If you are interested in helping keep the county government in downtown Detroit, contact MHPN at **www.mhpn.org.**

On the rural front in **Oakland Township, a Flumerfelt farmstead** barn is being moved to accommodate new development. Most of the farmstead will be demolished, but one of the three barns is being saved by the Oakland County Historical Society. It is being dismantled and will be rebuilt at Cranberry Lake Farm and Park. The barn has a signature of J. Flumerfelt and a date of 1879 and the name has been associated with this part of the county for over a century. **Steve Stier,** historic barn restoration specialist, will be brought in to oversee the reconstruction.

The **Plymouth Historical Museum** has a special exhibit for children called ***Museum Treasures from A-Z*** and features aprons, accordions, zithers and zippo lighters. Kids have fun with the alphabet scavenger hunt and the letter "Q" which is for the quilts from the Underground Railroad. The Museum is at 155 S. Main St in Plymouth. Call **734-455-8940** or visit their website at **www.plymouthhistory.org.**

Green Oak Township has finally signed a lease with the Historical Society for the use of the 1856 **Historic Hall**. As of February, it looked like a done deal. They have been trying for 28 years to have a historic home in Livingston County. Congratulations to all who worked so hard on this project.

Another place that sounds like a nice road trip from Ann Arbor is the **Troy Museum and Historic Village** located at 60 W. Wattles Road at the NW corner of Wattles (17 Mile Road) and Livernois. The Museum is in the former Township Hall by the Historic Village Green and is administered by the Troy Public Library. There are seven other historic buildings there as well, including an 1820s log cabin, the 1860s Caswell Farm House, 1877 Poppleton one-room School, 1918 Mercantile Store, 1910 Print Shop, 1890s Wagon Shop and 1850s Troy Town Hall. You can call them at **248-524-3570** or email them at **museum@ci.troy.mi.us.** They are especially oriented to teaching children about the past.

The **South Lyon Area Historical Society** is offering the **Little Village Chapel** (1930) for weddings. It is located in McHattie Park and can seat 70 guests. Contact them at 248-437-9929. Their historical **Witch's Hat Museum** is located at 300 Dorothy Street in South Lyon, where they also have the **Washburn School** and the caboose. They are open Sundays and Thursdays. Watch for their Depot Days September 11, 2004.

The **Detroit Historical Museum** has many interesting exhibits in its various museums. One to be aware of is "***American Icons: Detroit Designs***" which highlights the fact that the World Trade Center was designed by a Detroit architect (**Minoru Yamasaki,** whose buildings dot the area) and that the Gateway Arch in St. Louis was also designed in Detroit by architect **Eero Saarinen**. This exhibit opens Saturday, May 22 and will be up until May 2005. The Museum also offers group tours of **Belle Isle** and **Historic Fort Wayne**, has a series called "Behind the Scenes" which are events that are ticketed, and their ever popular **Historic Houses of Worship Tours** which begin April 5 and continue through December. Held the first Monday of the month, these tours usually visit about five historic churches. Their popular **Sunday Strolls** this year include a tour of **Corktown on Sunday, May 2** and **Mt. Elliott Cemetery on Sunday, May 16**. Each of these is between $15-20 for non-members. To get all this in front of you, check out their website at **www.detroithistorical.org.**

And last but not least, we have the Ford Motor Company's **River Rouge Tours** which will start again in **May**. Check out their website, **www.thehenryford.org** for more information. Other events on the automobile front are the **Ypsilanti Orphan Car Show on Sunday, June 6** (call **Jack Miller** at **734-482-5200**), the celebration of the 100th birthday of the **Reo Car Company** in Lansing **July 13-17** (**www.reoclub.org** or call **517-776-2089**) with tours, seminars and a procession of historic vehicles, or the **Carnival of Cars** in **Shelby Twp.** on **June 13th (313-278-1655).** For an overview of all car-related events this summer, visit the website of the ANHA at **www.autoheritage.org**.

We have just learned from member **Jerry Van Gasse,** Commander of the Erwin **Prieskorn American Legion Post**

46 in Ann Arbor, that they will be hosting a **Prayer Breakfast** to coincide with the dedication of the World War II Monument in Washington D.C. on **Saturday, May 29**. The breakfast will be at 9 AM the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 610 Hilton Blvd. adjacent to Briarwood Mall. The cost to veterans is $10.50 and guests may attend as well. Following the breakfast will be a short program honoring the veterans of World War II. If you are interested, contact **Jerry** at **734-663-3920, Bob Wischmeyer** at **734-995-1729** or **Doug Woolley** at **734-971-0124.**

SUSAN WINEBERG

News You Can Use

Al Eicher and his organization has produced a video document on the "***OrphanTrain in Michigan***" and is developing another Michigan history project called "***The Aviation History of Michigan.***" It will begin with the 1860s and cover balloon ascents and barnstorming pilots. If you have any photos, newspaper articles, air show posters, etc. contact him at **al@program-source.com** or call him at **248-333-2010**. He says that his firm has completed 22 Michigan history documentaries since 1994 and has been recognized by the Historical Society of Michigan. Sounds like a winner!

Governor Granholm's **Cool Cities Initiative** is getting a lot of press and she has recognized that historic preservation projects contribute to mixed use environments and thus is an important ingredient in creating cool neighborhoods. There were four workshops on this subject from **April 5-8.** On the 5th they were in Marquette, on the 6th in Bay City, on the 7th in Detroit and on the 8th in Grand Rapids. You can call the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at **517-335-2722** for more details.

Love **lighthouses**? **Save Our South Channel Lights** held its Annual Dinner and Meeting on March 26 in Mt. Clemens. The purpose is to save two lighthouses from 1859 which have guided ships into the fresh water delta once known as the Venice of America (and now as Lake St. Clair). If you are interested in helping them, visit **www.soschannellights.org.** or call **Dan Keifer** of the Clinton River Watershed Council at **248-601-0606.**

The Michigan SHPO has recently released a 20 page report on the renovation of historic schools, showing that it is always less money to restore than to replace. It is called **Hard Lessons: Causes and Consequences of Michigan's School Construction Boom.** It is available on the Michigan Land Use Institute's website as a pdf. Find it at **www.mlui.org.pdf**
The report features restored schools in Jackson, Escanaba, Grand Rapids and Harbor Springs.

Know of a good home for a historic **log cabin**? Some folks in **Bad Axe (Huron County)** have a log building over 100 years old that they want to find a nice home for it. Contact the **Gilbert Family** at **989-269-8803** or **989-775-7878.**

The **Michigan Library Consortium** has two special programs for those interested in preserving Michigan history: a spring program on ***"Digital Preservation & Management"*** and a fall program on "***Conducting & Preserving Oral Histories.***" The spring program is **April 13** at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, Michigan. You can contact **Ruth Dukelow** in Lansing at **800-530-9019 x21.**

And the Recent Past Preservation Network (RPPN) just announced **H-Net,** the history and legacy of the 1960s which is based at **Michigan State University.** H-Net is a network of scholars in the humanities and social sciences that creates and coordinates electronic networks. You can visit them at **www.h-net.org** or email **H-Net@H-Net.msu.edu.** Cool!

Volunteers Still Needed

Like to garden? We're looking for someone to coordinate volunteers to oversee planting, weeding and watering in the **garden**. We have lots of Indians but no chiefs, so if you like to mānage people, this is for you. We will be having the Professional Volunteer Corps work in the garden on **Saturday, May 8th** and they will be painting the walls of the house as well. Anyone who wishes to help is more than welcome. **734-662-9092.**

Your Museum

Continued from page 1.

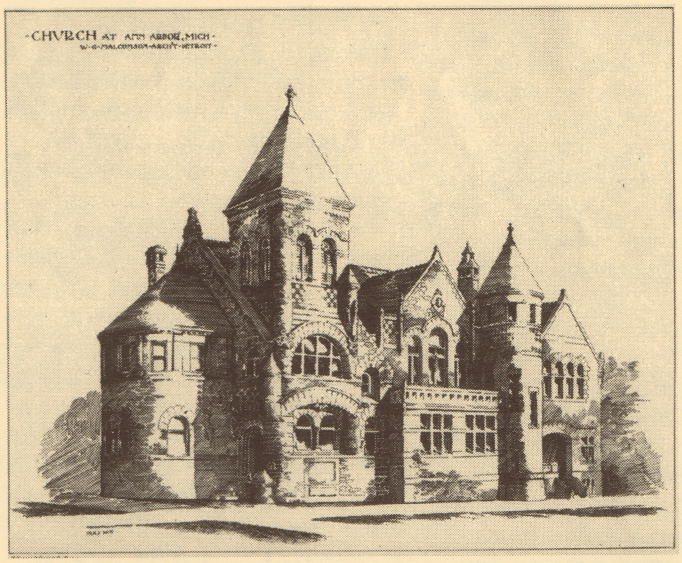
the holiday season we will do a "***Toys in the Attic***" exhibit in conjunction with our open houses. Alice has also been talking with **Elaine Sims** of the **Gifts of Art** Program at the UM Hospitals in preparation for an exhibit at the hospital.

We know we've written about all the things that need to be repaired including the fence, the drain, the front porch and the back door. Bill Click, a graduate of the Preservation program at EMU, has been our point man for this and will be working on these items over the summer. But Bill now has an exciting new part-time job, hosting a new series on HGTV called DYI (**Do It Yourself** -I guess to compete with This Old House). So, one of our own will be nationally known! Congratulations to Bill on this wonderful opportunity!

Judy Chrisman, our Collections Chair, had a lot to report this month. She is heading out to Willow Run soon to make final decisions on what to keep and what to deaccession. **Patricia Hatch** recently gave us a **Magic Lantern.** People from the **Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County** have been looking at our Bibles in order to enter the information in them in their **Bible Registry.** The Bach, Botsford and McNabb bibles are of special interest to them. **Dan Hendrix,** the son of Eunice Hendrix, also donated a framed portrait of the founder of Ann Arbor, **John Allen.** This is a wonderful artifact for us to have!

On the money front, it was reported at our last board meeting that **Barry Chapman** is researching grant sources for us to do fund raising and promotional events. We also learned that we've had some responses to our request for volunteers, including one for the Endowment Committee and another for the newsletter editor. We are hopeful we'll get some more. We also heard from **Tom Cawood** of Columbiaville Michigan who has offered to bring us historically correct plants from an acre he is cultivating. Thanks to all who responded so quickly to our pleas!

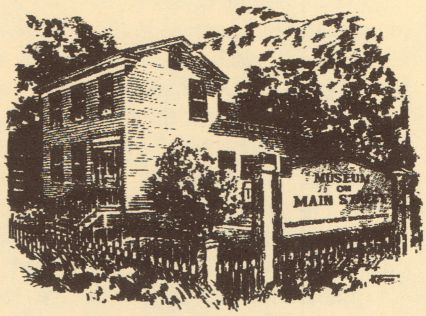
Remember When?



This design "for a church in Ann Arbor" in 1889 was never built but the architect, William G. Malcomson, designed other buildings in the area, including the Frieze Building and Starkweather Hall in Ypsilanti. Collection of Susan Wineberg

You won't remember this one because it was never built! But it is fascinating that this lovely church was commissioned in 1889 by an unknown local denomination by the architect who later co-designed the **Ann Arbor High School** (now the Frieze Building) at Huron and State in 1905. The church's asymmetrical massing, rusticated stone and squat form are all characteristics of the **Richardsonian Romanesque style** that was so popular in the 1880s.

William G. Malcomson partnered with William E. Higginbotham to build that building and the Pratt Block on S. Main in Ann Arbor in 1896, as well as the **Howell Public Library, Starkweather Hall, Memorial Christian Church,** and **Welch Hall** in Ypsilanti. The firm also designed 75% of Detroit's public school buildings from 1894 until 1923, including Central High School, now **Old Main** on the campus of **Wayne State University.** Schools by Malcomson and Higginbotham can be found across Michigan.



WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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